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THE DOWNWARD ROAD.

It was a flushed, angry face that looked up, and harsh tones that said:

'I don't care what people say, father; I suppose I am old enough to judge for myself.

'It's not a bad thing, Gavin, to mind what ither folks say about you When you really get to I don't care, you are in a bad way. I hope for all you have said you dinna mean a word o' it.

'I just mean it all; I don't care. I am going to say what I like and do what I like in the future.'

'Then it's nane o' my money I'll give you the day, Gavin if don't care is the road you are for taking, the sooner you come to the end o' your tether the better for you. But you'll cool. Doubtless you'll cool an' come to yoursel', lad.

And old Baillie Irwin took out his bandanna and threw it over his face.

Don't go to sleep, father, till you answer me a question or two. Do you mean me to stay in Forbes' office much longer?'

'You were entered there for three years; you ken weel if your time is out or no.

'But, father, he is such a bigoted, narrow, strict old fogy, and—'

'You've been long finding it out, Gavin. I'm thinking you may stand it for a few months longer. Stick to your 'greement, lad, like an honest fellow.

'But, father, I have got my eyes opened lately, an—

'Heeh! what's opened them? Your Crieff lassie, eh?'

'Father, Jessie Crieff is an angel.'

'I wish she was. It's not an ill wish, that, Gavin for the lassie; but I'm thinking she's far awa' from it yet.'

Gavin Irwin had been two years in Duncan Forbes' house and office, and not felt his strict rules and old-fashioned ways particularly unbearable.

But a few weeks ago a pretty villa belonging to the barony of Crieff had been occupied as a summer residence by the gay Miss Crieff and her aunt, and Jessie has chosen to enliven the monotony of her retirement by paying a great deal of attention to the handsome Gavin Irwin.

Jessie Crieff was one of a type of young ladies peculiar to the last half century, and, unhappily—a fast, superficial woman, who thought dissent, doubt, and indifference were the symptoms of intellectual superiority.

She shrugged her pretty shoulders at the most sacred subjects, and smiled away the faith of centuries with a pity so fascinating, and so full of interest, that it was small wonder a young, self-admiring fellow like Gavin should be impressed and bewildered by her sophistries.

He went straight to Crieff Villa after his interview with Mr. Irwin, and found a much more sympathetic listener.

Jesse was so kind that Gavin went back to the little room at Duncan Forbes with very high hopes, and very wide ideas, as to the respective position of man and man, though of course the lawyer not having taken a lesson from Miss Crieff, was ill-prepared to understand him.

'Gavin,' said he, kindly, 'the new minister has come. I hope you'll like him better than you have done Mr. Sterling lately.

'I shall not hear him, sir, to morrow. I have made up my mind to fish in the morning, and have promised to drive out with Miss Crieff in the afternoon.'

'You'll no make a scandal to' that kind on the Lord's day, Gavin; foreby shaming the guid old man, your father.'

'If people choose to be shamed and scandalized where they have no call to be that's not my fault, sir. There is no law against fishing and driving that I know of.'

'No, to speak 'o the law o' God, Gavin, there's whiles a higher law than the statute book—there's public opinion.'

'I don't care that for public opinion.'

And Gavin snapped his thumb and finger contemptuously.

'Then you are a fool, or worse, an' I'm sorry for them that are kin to you.'

Gavin kept his word, and rather ostentatiously so, for he strolled slowly up street with his rod and creel, just as the people were going to church.

He certainly had the satisfaction of perfectly horrifying them.

His drive with Miss Crieff was a still greater offence.

'A pretty, painted, Frenchified infidel!' said Ducan Forbes, bitterly; a lassie who scorns the kirk, and me sures en the word o the Lord by her ain small understanding. Gavin Irwin is courting doll on an disgrace, an nae guid lad will sort wi him.

Everybody shared the lawyers opinion and the young men who sat at the table with Gavin gave the offender but the scantiest courtesy, and quite excluded him from their little social plans.

While Jessie remained in Campsaile he did not care much.

He chose to call it jealousy and envy, and paraded his friendship with the Baron of Creiffs sister very offensively to all his old acquaintances.

But Jessie left Campsaile with the summer birds and flowers, and very soon after this even Gavins time was out with Lawyer Forbes.

He was anxious to buy a share in the lawyers business, and his father was now inclined to please him; but Forbes declined all Mr Irwins offers, and plainly told the old man that his sons unpopularity would injure his custom.

Our steady folk, ye ken neighbor, like a man who walks in the old ways; we are a plain bodies, an hae sma skill of these new philosophies. The law of God and the law of Scotland is just as much as we can manage.

Gavin was much hurt and disappointed.

He was young and wanted friends and company, and no one responded to his advances.

Winter came on and it was so dreary that Gavin took the next wrong step

As good people would not notice him he fell into bad company.

Anyone knows how rapidly a man may travel on his downward road.

Gavin soon began to take a glass, and not to care who knew it, better men than he got before the wind occasionally.

He had long ceased going to church, and pretty Maggie Lindsey, who had dared to smile in his face, long after the mother and sister cut him directly, had now ceased to notice him, and gives her smiles to Alexander Forbes, his special aversion.

The winter passed, and in the spring the news of Miss Creiffs marriage came to Campsaile.

It was a very bitter drop added to his cup, for Gavin had felt sure that Jessie would return with summer an explain in some satisfactory manner her mysterious silence; and to the loss of this hope was added the spiteful condolences or the open sarcasms of all who knew him.

He thought his cup was quite full but a greater sorrow awaited him.

One evening in the early summer, Baillie Irwin quietly died in his chair, of heart disease, and people did not scruple to say that Gavin's conduct had hastened his end.

No one had a kind word for him except the new minister, a man whom Gavin had always avoided, partly because he was his father's chief friend and confident, and party because he disliked his admonitions.

Now, however, they were compelled to come in contact, and Gavin at last did justice to the good man's kindly nature. But he took the ten thousand pounds his father had left him, and left Campsaile, as he supposed, never to return

The minister thought not.

He can't sell the house and the twenty acres around it, wife, and he'll come home again I promised his father I would be watching for him.

It seemed a hopeless kind of watching.

Year after year slipped away, and no one heard a word from Gavin Irwin

The rent of the house was remmitted to a firm he had chosen in Liverpool, for five years; then the tenant left, and for three years more the Irwin place stood empty.

In these three years the minister often wondered where the lost lad was.

The rent of the homestead, while it was rented, was enough for life's necessities, but now, what was he doing?

He was seeing many extremes He had been as supercargo to the tropics, in a whalling ship to the Alantic ocean. He had a successful speculator in New York and he had been digging for gold in Australia.

He had been gambling with princes at Baden Band, and fighting for his rights where the roughs of Nevada.

But one night, ten years after his fataer's death, when he was just recovering from an attack of the teerible vomito of Matamoras, he suddenly bethought him of the pleasent old home among the breezy hills.

He heard in his soul the chime of the church bells, and the faint, sweet music of the people's singing. just as he heard them on that Sunday morning when he went fishing to please the fair and fickle Jessie Crieff, and an interest desire for those cool old rooms and scented garden ways, for the murmuring trout streams and broom covered hills possessed him.

He feebly sought for his purse and counted his money. Yes, there was enough left to cloth him decently and carry him home; and he would be content hence forward to farm his father's land and live as his father had done.

He had to travel slowly, but one evening, ten weeks afterward he got off a steamer and stood once more on the Campsaile pier. No one knew him.

He stopped a little girl to ask if Doctor Anderson still lived at the manse, and then took his way quietly towards it.

As he opened the garden gate a lovely girl looked up from her carnations at him.

He asked timily for the minister, and she led him into the well known parlor, with its low, roof and old fashioned furniture.

Mr. Anderson came thrsughtally in, looked at Gavin curiously, held out his hand, and the moment he spoke, said:

I thought so. Welcome home—welcome home I promised your father to say this much for him when this glad day round. I'm a proud man to do it sir. Lucy, Lucy! bring some cakes and a glass of cream. You ll be glad, Gavin, I know you well, to taste the wholesome oatmeal again.

And so he ran on while he took off Gavin hat and coat, and gave a score of hospitablo orders.

So Gavin stayed at manse for some weeks, and what passad between the minister and him no one ever knew; but I think Gavin told him most of those ten years since and failure. But he had came home now, he said, to repair his father s house and in it; perhaps, in time, he migh win agains the respect of his fathers friends.

So Gavin stayed all summer with the minister, and by the end of it—as any one might have foreseen—he had but one thought in life—Lucy Anderson.

He was almost sure Lucy loved him too, but he never dared to speak to her. But one night, as he sat full of dreary thoughts about his wasted past, Lucy came and touched him

Mr. Irwin, she said, you are sad, and you make me miserable. What is the matter?

I love—and I am unworthy to love.

Did she say so?

Mr. Anderson heard and rejoiced.

He gave Gavin one hundred pounds, which he said was rent due him, and advised him to begin at once putting the place in order.

It would employ him while he looked around,and it was best not to be in a hurry with any plan.

'Lucy! oh, Lucy!'

Love had manifold ways of explaining itself—These two looked in each others eyes and saw all they wanted. But the father was not so sanguine.

He remembered the past ten years and trembled for Lucy's happiness.

'I'll tell you, Gavin, what I will do. You shall performe a thing I ask of you, and then I will say amen to Lucy, yes.'

'I will do any thing in the power of man to do.'

'My request may seem eccentric and purposeless, but I have good reasons for making it. It is now the end of August, you shall go every night to your father's house at ten o'clock, until midnight strikes—every night, mind—and I will give you an answer at the New Year.

'Your wish is a singular one, but I will fulfill it.

'You are to take no company, no stimulant, and no light of any kind; and you are to keep our tryst in spite of wind and weather.'

'I will strictly fulfill your orders.

No one spoke more of the strange compact, but it was silently fulfilled to the letter.

Only on Christmas Eve, the old man pressed his hand as he left and said:

Be content; your trial is nearly over.

So Gavin went out of the cozy, lighted parlor into the dark, cold, lonely house with a happy heart.

He had sat about an hour when he heard footsteps, and saw the glimmer of a light. The door opened and the minister and Lucy entered; but it was Lucy that kissed him and said:

Come home, Gavin! Come home. Papa says so, and I am yours, darling, forever and from this hour.

Yes, Gavin, said the minister, as they talked together afterward, I thought tonight is Christmas Eve; no better time to forgive and forget, to trust and love; and when I asked Lucy she said it was God put the thought into my heart, and so were both came for you.

And now, my dear second father, tell me why you put me through such an ordeal?

Because I wanted, first, that you should think well over the past, and I know that the lonely walk in all weathers, and the lonely house, so full of tender memories, was the best place for thought. Secondly, I knew if you had the resolution and love to keep a promise extending over four months, you might be trusted with a graver promise. And now I have a double reward for you. Here is the order for ten thousand pounds and interest for ten years, your father left it with me for you. We both knew you would waste the first thousand pounds, and very likely, also would wander into the very far countries, and feed upon husks before you would come home, sooner or later, for you were well brought up in the way you should go—and this was to be the portion of your second, Gavin.

And Lucy, father?

Lucy gave herself to you, and I'm well enough content. I am proud of the way you kept your bargain and everybody has the good word for you now, Gavin.

And I am glad enough for their good word and kind greetings, father. I'll do all a man may do to preserve both.

Thats right, Gavin Irwin! If a man doesn'tcare for the respect of his fellow-creatures he will very soon lose respect for himself, and when self-respect is once gone Satan has a good lien on every thing else.

THE HOUSE RESTAURANT.—The Representatives have selected as their purveyors of good cheer two Southern gentlemen, sir! One is Mr. McKeagh, of Baltimore, who was in charge of a hotel at Quebec during the rebellion, which was the favorite resort of refugees of the Confederate persuasion, and the other is Mr. Mercer, of Georgia, who was the keeper of the Southern Restaurant on the grounds of the Philadelphia Exposition. It is said that they know how to keep a hotel, and it remains to be seen whether they or the New Hampshire host who is to keep the Senate restaurant will supply the most toothsome lunches.—Washington Cor. Boston Journal.

AMIABLE LOOKING.—M. C. Butler, the hero of the Hamburg massacre, and the new Senator from South Carolina, is described as a man who looks like a lamb, rather than a destroying angel—a handsome man, of good height and figure, gentle features, with a general aspect of extreme amiability. He looks neither Southern nor Northern' but simply a gentleman. It is easy to associate him with household loves and Sunday-school celebrations; with massacres, never.'

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